

(Washington, DC) - On Friday, Congressman Tim Ryan's (D-Ohio) Western Reserve Heritage Area Study Act was passed by the Senate and is now on its way to the President to be signed into law. Ryan's legislation, H.R. 412, passed the House of Representatives in March and was sent to the Senate where it was passed as part of S. 203. The act authorizes a study to designate the 14 counties of northern Ohio as a National Heritage Area .

Ryan's legislation is a crucial first step toward the creation of the Western Reserve Heritage Area. If the study confirms that the Western Reserve region meets the National Park Service guidelines, then a subsequent bill will be introduced by Ryan to formally establish and fund the Western Reserve National Heritage Area. This designation would make the Heritage Area eligible to receive \$10 million in federal funds over 10 years and more federal dollars in future years, can then be used as a resource to enhance and promote the region and encourage public-private support for investment in preservation, conservation and economic initiatives.

The S.203 specifically authorizes \$250,000 in federal funding for the National Park Service's Midwest Region Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program to conduct a study of a Western Reserve National Heritage Area in Trumbull, Mahoning, Portage and Summit Counties and 10 additional counties in Northern Ohio. The City of Warren in Trumbull County is the historic capital of the Western Reserve.

**"Our region of Ohio deserves national recognition for its rich history and vibrant culture,"** said Congressman Ryan. **"Establishing the Western Reserve Heritage Area will provide our region with additional resources and a focused plan to preserve our history and culture and promote our area. The passage of this legislation is an important victory for our region and has great potential to further fuel the power of regionalization to increase the economic strength and quality of life in the 17<sup>th</sup>**

**District and surrounding areas.**

Encompassing the counties of Trumbull, Mahoning, Ashtabula, Portage, Geauga, Lake, Cuyahoga, Summit, Medina, Huron, Lorain, Erie, Ottawa and Ashland, the Western Reserve was established by the Governor of Connecticut, Jonathon Trumbull, in 1786 as one of the first settlements outside of the original thirteen colonies. It became the destination of many settlers whose property and land were devastated by the Revolutionary War. Museums as well as

historical landmarks, schools and businesses named for the Western Reserve serve as fixtures and sources of pride throughout this modern day region of Ohio that was the forerunner to the U.S. westward expansion.